



CASTLE FARMS

STORY BY EMILY BETZ TYRA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS KACHADURIAN



Aurélie Martins & Chris Hoffman

CASTLE FARMS, CHARLEVOIX

Vacationers from all over the Midwest escape to Charlevoix's Lake Michigan and Lake Charlevoix shores for 4th of July weekend, but this Dayton, Ohio, couple headed north with friends and family with a more intimate celebration in mind.

Aurélie and Chris grew up less than a mile away from each other in Farmington Hills, but didn't meet until after college. Location was the most important choice when they began making their wedding plans. Historic Castle Farms was the first and only place they looked—after falling in love with the French chateau-style buildings and the gorgeous grounds, they just went for it, says Chris.

The outdoor ceremony began at 5 p.m. in the Knight's Courtyard, with a reception under the original cathedral ceiling of the Knight's Castle to follow.

Both Aurélie and Chris wrote their own vows that day. Officiate John Rubadeau, Aurélie's English professor from the University of Michigan, led the ceremony on the steps of the castle. Since Aurélie is a French citizen and several family and friends from back home attended the ceremony, a family friend also performed a simple ceremony in French. The joyous toasting, dancing and celebrating that followed left nothing lost to translation. *U*

Aurélie's brother Alex played her favorite Neil Diamond tune, "Cherry, Cherry," as a transition into cocktail hour. The ring bearer and flower girl spontaneously plunked down on the courtyard lawn, entranced with the ceremony. "It helped that our officiant looks a little like Santa Claus," says Chris. Castle Farms was built in 1918, by the president of Sears, Roebuck, and Company to showcase the newest farm equipment. Today the historic Charlevoix landmark is a premier Northern Michigan destination for weddings and other special events.





Chris and Aurélie loved the attention to detail Charlevoix's mom-and-pop vendors paid to make their day so glorious. Aurélie had her hair done at Hair Qtrs. in Charlevoix. Backdoor Florist in East Jordan created the flower arrangements. Grey Gables Inn chefs Darren and Kelly Romano, both Culinary Institute of America graduates, catered an exquisite dinner. After a champagne toast and passed hors d'oeuvres, guests enjoyed a buffet of beef bourguignon and chardon-nay chicken with wild rice.

A castle styled after the stone barns found in Normandy made an unbelievably romantic backdrop for photos. Grey Gables Inn pastry chef Kelly Romano has a special cake menu just for Castle Farms weddings that includes poppy seed cake with a light almond cream, and chocolate cake with a Grand Marnier-spiked Bavarian cream. Boyne City's A+ Digital DJs kept guests dancing into the night, in a castle all aglow.

PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS KACHADURIAN, 231-883-4325, KACHADURIAN.COM
VENUE: CASTLE FARMS, CHARLEVOIX, 231-237-0884, CASTLEFARMS.COM

Wedding Notebook

CASTLE FARMS



Romantic courtyard chapels, magnificent formal gardens, soaring towers, and stone archways all combine to create a unique and memorable wedding at Castle Farms. Renowned for its grandeur and old-world charm, Castle Farms is open throughout the year and provides an exquisite backdrop during the four gorgeous northern Michigan seasons. Located in the beautiful resort town of Charlevoix, Michigan, a wedding in the unique and historic setting of Castle Farms is one your guests will never forget!

Wedding Receptions

Castle Farms has six beautiful rooms that incorporate simple décor with historical architecture for an unmatched elegance. The *King's East Garden Room* is surrounded by French doors that line the entire room to incorporate the surrounding English Garden and King's Grand Courtyard, allowing your guests to mingle indoors and out. The newest addition to Castle Farms, the *King's West Garden Room*, has a refined elegance with wainscoting, crown molding, French doors, and white chandeliers. The *Knights Castle* offers a



traditional castle feel with its original cathedral ceiling and large center chandelier. One of Castle Farms' largest reception areas is the stylish *King's Great Hall*, which features a dramatic ceiling with wrought iron chandeliers, cathedral windows at every turn, original stone walls, and cozy balconies. The *Queen's Royal Tent* serves as a blank canvas for your own touches of color and style. Also included with the Queen's Royal Tent is the historic *Queen's Tavern* for your cocktail hour.

accommodations



Charlevoix has many accommodation options to choose from, including several wonderful hotels and charming inns. Visit www.charlevoix.org or www.charlevoixlodging.com for all of the lodging options in the area.

Wedding Ceremonies



Say "I do" in breathtaking courtyard chapels with water fountains and surrounding gardens, the picturesque setting for your special day. At Castle Farms there are four stunning chapels, each unique and individual to match every wedding style! The *Knights Courtyard* showcases some of Castle Farms' most refined architecture, including an octagonal stone chapel with ornate crenellations. The *Queen's courtyard* is a monument to sophistication and simplistic style, featuring stone arches, a cobblestone walkway, and an artesian fountain. The *King's West Courtyard* presents brides with an intimate and enclosed garden complete with stunning gazebo, verdant lawns, and numerous types of flowers. The *King's Indoor Chapel* is available throughout the year. Brides will find dramatic ceilings with wrought iron chandeliers, grand cathedral windows, and original stone walls.

catering



Wouldn't it be nice to find a caterer that fits your style and budget and bring in a bartender of your choice? At Castle Farms, we provide you with a list of experienced caterers that vary on their menu, presentation style, and pricing, but who all create incredible food and provide wonderful service. You will find menu options that range from formal dining to a more casual approach, such as family-style dining or food stations. Choosing your own caterer and purchasing your own alcohol is not only a major cost savings, but also allows you the flexibility to create the wedding you've been dreaming of!



Recreation

Charlevoix offers plenty of recreational opportunities such as golfing, boat charters, and beautiful beaches with crystal blue water! If you are interested in shopping, you are in luck! From art galleries to antique, clothing, or toy stores, there is a store for everyone. When your feet get weary and your stomach is growling, you will want to visit one of many restaurants in the area. From fancy to fun, your whole family will enjoy the atmosphere and food.

Castle Farms

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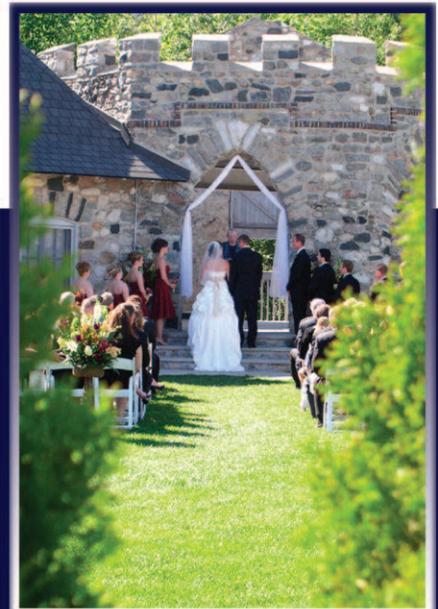
PROPRIETORS
Richard & Linda Mueller
DIRECTOR OF WEDDINGS
Anora Purdy

RECEPTION CAPACITY
Varies by room

RECEPTION ROOMS
6

CERAMONY LOCATIONS
4

Castle Farms



Featuring the Grand Bridal Expo - October 18, 2009

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www.CastleFarms.com